

12. C. 2
The Divine Institution of the *Ministry*,
and the Absolute Necessity of *Church-*
Government.

A
SERMON

Preach'd before the
UNIVERSITY
OF
OXFORD:
ON

Sunday the 21st of September, 1729.

By JOSEPH BETTY, M. A.
Fellow of *Exeter* College in *Oxford*.

Κ
Οὐ χρὴ δημοσίᾳ λαϊκὸν λόγον κινεῖν ἢ δι-
δάσκειν ἀξίωμα ἑαυτῷ διδασκαλικὸν ἐν-
τεῦθεν περιποιούμενον, ἀλλ' εἰκεῖν τῇ πα-
ραδοθείσῃ παρὰ τῷ κυρίῳ ταξεί.

Canon 64. Con. Trull.

The SECOND EDITION Corrected.

OXFORD:

Printed for *Sam. Wilmot*, Bookseller; And Sold by
J. and J. Knapton, *R. Knaplock*, and *T. Astley* in
St. Paul's Church-Yard, *S. Bri* in *Ave-Mary-Lane*,
and *B. and C. Motte* in *Fleet-Street*, *London*. 1729.

Price Sixpence.

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**MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM**

TO
The Right Reverend
FATHER in GOD,
JOHN,
By Divine Permission,
LORD BISHOP
OF
OXFORD,

THIS DISCOURSE of
The Divine Institution of the
MINISTERS,

AND

The Absolute Necessity of
CHURCH-GOVERNMENT,

IS,

With the most Devout Reverence,

The

he most Fervent Zeal,
And the most Profound Humility,
Inscribed, By,

My LORD,

Your LORDSHIP'S

Most Obedient,

Most Devoted,

Humble Servant,

Exeter Coll.
Sept. 28. 1729.

JOSEPH BETTY.

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the
University of Oxford.

GALAT. Chap. I. Ver. 1.

*Not of Men, neither by Man, but by
Jesus Christ, and God the Father.*

THO' the Loveliness and Beauty
of Religion are Motives strong
enough to engage the Esteem and
Admiration of the World; Tho'
Religion itself be highly Agreeable to all the
Laws of Reason; Tho' it be necessarily al-
low'd to be the Ornament and Perfection of
our Nature; Yet were its Dispensers en-
tirely Unauthoriz'd; Had their Precepts re-
ceiv'd no Sanction, nor They Themselves
any Commission; were there indeed no Di-
vine Positive Institution, all the Plausible
Arguments, all the Powerful Obligations,
A which

which are generally Pleaded in its Behalf, would then be very Precarious and Uncertain. A Voluntary Choice might indeed Recommend, or a Discretionary Power would perhaps naturally Enforce its Doctrines; but an Absolute Necessity of Actual Obedience would be entirely Cancell'd. The harsh and more severe Precepts of Christianity, would easily find too Treacherous a Friend in our Corrupted Natures, to be rightly Observ'd and Embraced; The more easy and gentle Dictates of the Gospel, tho' sufficiently Applauded, would not constantly be follow'd; And the most Valuable Truths (always the Greatest Blessings, tho' seldom the most Welcome Guests) would be often Rejected with Contempt and Disdain. The Truth of these Assertions is (I conceive) too plainly Evident to be Deny'd, and may be fully Confirm'd by an Observation familiar enough to us All, That the most proper Advices, the most prudent Counsels, the most useful Admonitions, unless Given by a Person, who has a Warrantable Right of Admonishing, and an Uncontested Power of Instructing, are commonly look'd upon as Unseasonable, Trifling, and Impertinent. The Truths themselves, how Important soever, are generally neglected, and He that too Zealously propagates them, is not always undeservedly ill treated. And indeed for what Reason should He be allow'd to Preach, unless it appears that He is really sent?

But what if Noisy and Impudent Pretenders are justly Punish'd for presumptuously
Arro-

Arrogating to themselves a Claim, to which Divine Laws have never given, and to which Human Laws never can give any Title; must therefore These Venerable Persons, who have an Undeniable Right, an Undoubted Authority, a Legal Commission to Preach and Instruct, to Reprove and Exhort, to Direct and Govern, must These, I say, meet with the same Successless, but Undeserv'd Fate? Must They be industriously treated with Scorn and Contempt? Must they be Entitled to Ignominy and Disgrace, to Poverty and Distress? Must They be Exposed to the Capricious Humours, the Witty Malice, and the Raging Insolence of *Arians* and *Atheists*, of *Libertines* and *Latitudinarians*, of *Socinians* and *Deists*? Must their Offices be Despised, their Doctrines Rejected, their Persons Vilify'd, and They Themselves obliged to be Men of Sorrows, and Acquainted with Grief.

Must the Preachers of Religion, the Representatives of God, the Fellow-Labourers of Christ, who have a Power superior to Angels and Arch-Angels themselves, be look'd upon Only as Idols set up by the Panicks of Fancy, or the Extravagancies of Superstition? And must they be esteem'd no Other than the servile Slavish Creatures of their Sovereign, but Imaginary Lord, the People?

If Profaneness and Infidelity; if *Libertinism* and (a) *Erastianism*; if the Confounding of

(a) See the *Theses* of *Erasmus*, particularly *Thesis* LXIII, with his Confirmation.

all Distinctions between Things Sacred and Civil; if the Levelling of all Orders and Degrees of Men among Us, must thus, every where, irresistibly Prevail; if the most Pure and Peaceable Religion, and the Innocent, but Unguarded Professors of it, must be thus cruelly wounded by the last Efforts of Incorrigible Men, the Poisonous Arrows of Detraction; If the Ministers of God's Word, the Messengers of his Will, the Stewards of his Mysteries, the Angels of his Church, the Stars in his Right-hand, and the Embassadors of Heaven, must be thus scandalously Defam'd, as the Great Instruments of deluding and deceiving a Stupid and Credulous World, in order to Support their Pride, to Advance their Interest, to Gratify their Ambition, and to Establish the most heavy and Intolerable Yoke of Bondage, a Spiritual Tyranny; If this be the Deplorable and Unhappy State of Those that wait at the Altar, it is certainly not Unseasonable (especially upon (b) this Day) to Vindicate our Mission, to Prove our Authority, and to Magnify our Office. For What, What indeed have we Receiv'd? And how truly Mean and Contemptible is our Commission, unless We have Actually Receiv'd it from Heaven?

In my following Discourse, I shall Endeavour to Demonstrate,

(b) *Ordination-Sunday.*

First.

First, That God has Instituted and Establish'd a Ministry by Christ and his Apostles to Act between Himself and Mankind, in the Great and Important Affair of their Salvation.

Secondly, That all Opposition to This Ministry really is, and must necessarily be look'd upon as Sinful.

Thirdly, That no Excuse can be offer'd by Man, which may plausibly be supposed to Prevail with God, to Pardon Those that Persevere in the Guilt of This Abominable Sin.

Lastly, I shall Conclude with Proper Inferences from the Doctrines established.

It would be Endless to prove, that almost all Nations, in which there have appear'd any Light of Reason, any Traces of Knowledge, any Improvements in Learning, have generally had their Priests. To this Purpose I omit to mention the *Brahmins*, the *Magi*, the *Culdees*, the *Druids*, and the infinitely tedious Catalogue of Religious Orders in the more early Rise and Settlement of Nations. As Unnecessary also would it be to Observe, that Priests of all Nations, as well as Religions, were indeed in this pious Sense truly the same; That is, They were constantly look'd upon as Successful Mediators between God and Man. It is moreover Universally Acknowledg'd, that the Business of These Priests was to Teach, to Exhort, to Instruct Men how to Pray, to Advise what was most

Expe-

Expedient for them to ask ; What Vows, What (e) Sacrifices, What Oblations would be most Acceptable to the Deity, as Proper to Appease his Anger, or Conciliate his Favour. In short, it is Needless to remark, that it was the Constant Office, and Proper Business of These Men, and of These only, to exhibit and perform all the various Rites and reverential Ceremonies in Divine Worship ; which Worship, even by the Light of Nature, might have been originally Founded upon the Power and Goodness of some First Uncreated, Intelligent Principle.

As for Us Christians, Who happily enjoy the inestimable Benefit and Advantage of a Divine Revelation, We All know (if the Sacred Records may but modestly be allow'd to carry with them the same Degrees of Probability as a Common History) that the true Religion has had its Ministers, if not from the Beginning of the World, yet certainly from the Patriarchal Ages.

Before the Law, The Priesthood was originally lodg'd in the First-born, as not only the Ancient (d) *Jews*, but also the Christian *Fathers*, and many (e) Eminent Writers abundantly declare. Now These were justly Accounted the most Honourable in every Family, for indeed They were commonly

(c) See Bp. Potter's *Antiquities of Greece*.

(d) *Ab. Ezer*. in *Gen. Philo*, *Josephus*, Dr. *Spencer de Legibus Hebr.* *Grotius*, *Selden*, & *Bochart*. (e) See Bp. *Potter* Bp *Beveridge*, Dr. *Hicks*, Dr. *Nichols*, Dr. *Lightfoot*, and Mr. *Mede*.

(f) *Kings*

(f) Kings and Priests at the same time. And from hence it will manifestly Appear, that the Dignity of the Priesthood was certainly reputed very Great, as being only fit for the Greatest and most Eminent Persons fully to Enjoy, and wisely Exercise.

But be This as it will; That the Office was really executed, and that too to no Insignificant Purpose; That its Threats were neither look'd upon as meer *Niceties* or *Dreams*, nor its Censures esteem'd as altogether *Vain* and *Ineffectual*; And that the Persons, who Officiated in the Priesthood, were Sacred and Inviolable, is (I think) indisputably certain from the famous Story of (g) *Abraham* and *Abimelech*. It will also be more fully confirmed by the Consideration of *Noah's* (h) Blessing *Shem*, and Cursing *Canaan*; of *Isaac's* (i) Blessing *Jacob*, and of (k) *Jacob's* Authoritatively Dispensing his Paternal Benedictions to his Children. For, what tho' Every One may Bless Another, so far as Praying for the Favours, the Graces, the Assistances, and the happy Influences of God upon him, and This may in a very large, but improper Sense, be indeed call'd Blessing; yet solemnly to Pronounce a Benediction in the Name of the Lord *Jehovah*, is a full and undoubted Act of Authority, and can never be Valid without an exprefs Commission from God. Now that These Blessings and These Curses were really

(f) *Servius in Virg. &c.* Dr. *Outram de Sacrificiis.*
 (g) *Gen. Chap. 20. Ver. 17th.* (h) *Gen. Ch. 9. Verses 25, 26, 27.* (i) *Gen. Ch. 27. Ver. 28, 29.* (k) *Gen. Ch. 48. Ver. 20.* Mini-

Ministerial Acts, and must be absolutely Consider'd as Such, is Plain even to Demonstration, Because when They were once deliver'd, It was not in the Power of Him, by whom they were Publish'd, tho' ever so Willing, or ever so passionately Desirous, to Reverse or Alter them.

But not to dwell upon the Scanty Beginnings of a Religious Ministry in the dark and more early Ages, in which the very Shades and Dawnings of an Imperfect Faith were the Essence of God's Church, which upon Account of its Cloudy Littleness was scarce visible; And to Omit the solemn Ceremonies of the *Levitical* Institution, the *latent* but *certain* Significancy of its *Types*, and the Progressive Openings of its *Prophecies*; Let us proceed to consider the brighter Times, when the Sun of Righteousness arose with Healing in his Wings; when He fully Revealed his Heavenly Father's Will; when He graciously offer'd Terms of Salvation to Universal Mankind; when He founded and establish'd That Church, into which all Men must (1) Enter, who will be entitled to the Benefits of His Incarnation, His Passion, and His Resurrection.

Agreeably to This, We are told by the Sacred Oracles, that Our Blessed Saviour,

(1) Cujus (*Spiritus*) non sunt Participes, Qui non concurrunt ad Ecclesiam, sed semetipsos fraudant à Vita, &c. And again ubi enim Ecclesia, ibi & Spiritus Dei. *Irenæus*, Lib. 3. Cap. 11. Habere jam non potest Deum Patrem, qui Ecclesiam non habet Matrem. *Cyprianus* in Lib. de Unitate Ecclesie. ha-

having laid the first Foundation of his Church in the Synagogues of *Galilee*, where his Doctrines were Approved for their Transcendent Excellency, and his Divine Mission fully Confirm'd by his Surprising Miracles; where the Great Seal of Heaven Gave an Authentick Testimony to what he did; where never Man spoke as he spoke; and where He Himself was Glorify'd by All that heard him: He then enter'd upon the Difficult, and seemingly Impossible Undertaking, of Reducing a Rebellious World to the Obedience of Faith. He accordingly made choice, out of his Disciples and Followers, of such Persons as He thought fit to Instruct and Inspire, and to whom he should commit the Great Work of the Conversion of Mankind. Those He call'd Apostles, Those He Invested with such Power and Authority, as might Enable them to Preach his Doctrines; to Teach all Nations; to Baptize in his Name; to Celebrate the Holy Eucharist; to Convey Grace; to Publish His Laws; to Dispense His Pardons; to Disclose the Dreadfulness of his Terrors; and to Display the Wonders of his Mercy. And That he might give a greater Veneration to the Important Act of This Awful Solemnity, He Fasts, he Prays, he Consecrates them Thus, (m) "Receive Ye The
 " Holy Ghost! Whose Sins Ye Remit, They

(m) *John*, Chap. 20. Ver. 21, 22, 23. *Matt.* Ch. 28. Ver. 18, 19, 20. *Matt.* Ch. 5. Ver. 14. *Luke*, Ch. 10. Ver. 16. 2 *Cor.* Ch. 5. Ver. 18.

“ are Remitted unto them; And whose Sins
 “ Ye Retain, They are Retain’d. Ye are
 “ the Light of the World; As my Father
 “ sent Me, so send I You; Be Ye Assured,
 “ that He that Despiseth You, Despiseth Me;
 “ and He that Despiseth Me, Despiseth Him
 “ that sent Me. By Me unto You is com-
 “ mitted the Word of Reconciliation, and
 “ Ye are to Declare All the Counsel of
 “ God.

Now by Virtue of This Great, This
 Honourable, This Envy’d Commission,
 whereby The Apostles were Appointed by
 Christ as His own Immediate Substitutes and
 Vice-gerents in his Spiritual Kingdom;
 whereby They were endued with sufficient
 Authority, and with all the Necessary Quali-
 fications for the Proper Exercise of it, They
 Joyfully set out upon their important Embassy.
 They respectively Propagate their Uniform
 Doctrines; They Impose the Observance of
 them upon all Christian Converts, as abso-
 lutely Necessary to Eternal Salvation; They
 Plant Churches; They Ordain Elders;
 They Fix and Establish Bishops; They
 make Laws and Canons for the greater Se-
 curity⁽ⁿ⁾ of the Divine Institution; They Pre-
 scribe Rules of Decency and Order in the
 Exercise of Religious Worship; They Insti-
 tute a Form of *Sound Words*, and *Sound Dis-*

(n) See Bp. Hare’s *Scripture Vindicated*, and Mr.
 Hughes’s learned *Dissertations*.

cipline, that the Behaviour of *Christians* might be such as Becometh *Saints*; They Compose Differences; They Determine Controversies; They Receive Accusations; They Punish Offenders; They Censure the Scandalous; They Excommunicate the Contumacious; They fully Absolve the Contrite and Humble Penitent. And lastly, to keep up a Lawful Succession of Men Qualify'd to explain and adorn the Doctrine of That Great and Glorious High-Priest, God their Saviour in all Things; and that None might profanely Intrude into the Sanctuary of the Lord, or sacrilegiously Invade the Altar of God, They Constitute and Ordain Officers in such a Regular Subordination, as should be most Effectual to Preserve a lasting Establishment of Peace and Good Government in the Church of Christ, which was to continue 'till all its Faithful Members should be Triumphantly Receiv'd up into Glory.

Now the Adversaries of Our Church may then, if They please, be Informed, or indeed rather fully Convinced, that from hence it is we receive Our Power, from hence We claim our Authority, from hence We derive Our Commission, and from hence also, in a very Justifiable Sense, We sufficiently prove Our Uninterrupted Succession. They may be entirely satisfied, (if Any thing will satisfy them,) that the Ministry We now have, is the very Same which was Establish'd in the Apostolical Ages. For indeed, had it been a New, or a

Different Institution, We must have been very (o) early made Acquainted with it; We must have met with it in some of the *Councils*; We must have found it in some publick *Acts* and *Records*; Or We must have heard of it in some of the (p) *Communicatory Letters* of Particular Churches, which therefore must necessarily have Reach'd the whole Catholick Church. But These being entirely silent in this Affair, It amounts to Demonstration, That the Three Orders of Ecclesiasticks we now have, were

(o) The Excellent *Chillingworth* has given us an Unanswerable Argument to this Purpose; “*Episcopal Government* (says He) is acknowledged to have been “*Universally receiv’d* in the Church presently after “the Apostles Times.

“Between the Apostles Times, and That presently “after, there was not Time enough for, nor Possibility “of so great an Alteration.

“And therefore there was no such Alteration as is “pretended. And consequently *Episcopacy* being confessed to be so *Ancient* and *Catholick*, must be granted “to be also *Apostolick*.” See *Chillingworth’s* *Inst. Episc.*

The Learned *Grotius*, who (notwithstanding what he says in his Letters publish’d by Mr. *Le-Clerc*) was never prejudiced in favour of *Episcopal Government*, also Asserts, that “*Episcopacy* had its Beginning in the “*Apostolical Times*. And this (says he) is sufficiently “testify’d by the Catalogues of Bishops left us by “*Irenaus*, *Eusebius*, *Socrates*, *Theodoret*, and Others. See *Grotius de Imperio summarum Potestatum circa Sacra*. See also *Petrus Molinaus*, *Theodore Beza*, Bp. *Taylor*, Bp. *Hoadley*, Dr. *Maurice*, *Thorndike*, Bp. *Sanderson*, and *Hooker*.

(p) See the Preliminary Discourse to *Tertullian’s* *Prescription*, &c.

Actually

Actually instituted by Christ and His Holy Apostles. The Truth of This does (I think) Stand upon the very same Basis of Tradition, and is Confirm'd by the very same Arguments, by which the Authority of Scripture itself is Demonstrated.

As for the Promiscuous Use of the Terms of the Three Orders, and their being indiscriminately Apply'd, even in the Scriptures, to the very same Persons, and to the same Offices; nay sometimes to (q) Christ Himself, and the Apostles; sometimes to (r) Presbyters and Bishops indifferently; and sometimes also even to the Inferior Order of Deacons: it can (I think) be no great Objection to Those that know Any thing, and has been fully Answer'd by the Pretended Patron of the Levelling Scheme, St. Jerome Himself; Nay farther, the Sullen Father upon Conviction owns (s) *Ecclesia non est Quæ non habet Sacerdotes*, There can be No Church where there are No Priests. In Another

(q) Christ Himself is call'd Διακόνος Περιτομῆς, Rom. 15. 8. Paul and Apollos are call'd Διακόνου; and St. Paul Himself calls His Apostleship Διακονίαν, Acts 20. 24. Rom. 11. 13. 2 Tim. 4. 5. See also 1 Thes. 3. 2. 2 Cor. 3. 6. Ephes. 3. 7. 2 Cor. 11. 15. Colos. 1. 25. (r) The Promiscuous Application of the Terms Bishop, Presbyter, and Apostle, are also made use of by Chrysostom in 1 Tim. By Theodoret in 1 Tim. And by Ambrose in Lib. de Dignitate Sacerdot.
(s) Hieron. advers. Lucif.

Place (t) He expressly Asserts, *Quod Aaron & Filii ejus atque Levitæ fuerunt in Templo, Id Episcopi Presbyteri atque Diaconi sibi vendicent in Ecclesia*; What Aaron, and his Sons, and the Levites were in the Temple, That Bishops, Priests, and Deacons claim to themselves in the Church. And lastly He declares, (u) *Omnes Episcopi sunt Apostolorum Successores*, All Bishops are the Successors of the Apostles.

I need not critically Pursue This fruitful Point. I shall only add This Unanswerable Remark, That what I have Advanced has been at different times acknowledg'd by *Catholicks*, by *Hereticks*, by *Schismatics*, by Men of opposite Interests, different Sentiments, and contrary Parties; who could not therefore possibly Combine among themselves, to Impose a Piece of Forgery upon the World; but All of them agreed to acknowledge the Fact, as being invincibly Overcome by the Native Evidence of Truth.

Agreeably to the Principles, the Maxims, and the Notions which I have here laid down, (w) *St. Ignatius* Derives the Divine Institution of the Ministry in General, and the Original of Episcopacy in Particular, from Christ Himself, He Compares the Bishop, with his College of Presbyters, to Christ Presiding in the very midst of His Holy Apostles. And

(t) *Hieron.* in Epist. 85. ad *Evagr.* (u) *Hieron.* in Epist. 85. ad *Magnum Orat.* (w) See *St. Ignatius* passim, by *Dr. Smith*, Oxon; and *Bp. Pearson's* *Vindicia.*

in the Earnestness of his Soul he Prays, he Begs, he Beseeches the *Trallians*, the *Magnesi-ans*, the *Smyrneans*, the *Ephesians*, the *Philadelphians*, i. e. Those to whom he writes his Epistles, that They would not grossly Deceive themselves ; for if they were not within the Altar, They were absolutely deprived of the (x) Bread of God, the Proper Nurture of their Souls, the Successful Instruments of Grace, and the only Means of Eternal Salvation. And (y) again he says, Let All Reverence the Deacons as Jesus Christ, and the Bishops as the Father, and the Presbyters as the Sanhedrim of God, and College of the Apostles ; for without These there is No Church, and without These No Congregation can be Holy. St. (z) *Irenæus* Deduces the Ministerial Authority from the same Original, and makes the Succession of Bishops, from the Apostles, to be his Principal Argument against the most Abandon'd *Hereticks*, and the more Unreasonable *Schismaticks* of his Time. And farther, the same Glorious Martyr, speaking of Those very Persons to whom the Apostles committed the Government of the Churches, makes them much more Ancient than those *Hereticks*, that impiously Disturb'd and Undermin'd the Church of God ; and draws an unanswerable Argu-

(x) Epistle to the *Ephesians*. (y) Epistle to the *Trallians*. (z) See *Irenæus* in Lib. 3. Cap. 3.

ment for their Apostolick Institution, and their constant Succession in That Office, against Those that Innovated in Religion, and brought in the most Damnable Doctrines.

(a) *Clemens* earnestly urges the same Topick ; (b) *Cyprian* beautifully touches this Point ; And (c) *Tertullian* very happily makes Use of the same cogent Argument, and justly demands of The Hereticks, a Catalogue of Their Succession from the Apostles. And (d) *Origen*, speaking of Church-Governors, makes them immediately succeed the Apostles themselves, in the exalted Dignity of their High and Heavenly Office. The same also is very strenuously Asserted, and largely Proved, by *Eusebius* in his *Ecclesiastical* (e) *History*. In short, the Reality of a Divine Institution, is the Opinion of all the Fathers, and the Stream of Antiquity is vastly enlarg'd, by Confirming This Important Doctrine in the several Centuries thro' which it flows.

This Great Point then We have (I think) infallibly gain'd, that both the Scriptures and Antiquity Display and Confirm to Us the Existence, the Reality, and the Certainty of a Divine Mission and Institution. By Means of which the Evangelical Priesthood Translates Us out of Darknes into God's

(a) In his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*. See also *Clemens* of *Alexandria* in his *Padag.* (b) In his Epistles and Book of Unity. (c) In his Prescription against Hereticks. (d) See *Origen* Περὶ Ἐκκλησίας, and also his *Philocal.* Cap. 1. (e) See *Eusebius*, Lib. 3. Cap. 4.

Marvellous Light; Raifes Men from the Earth, and virtually brings God Himself down from the Regions of Heaven. By Blessing Visible Elements, it Makes them the Happy Instruments of Invisible Grace; It symbolically Disposes of That Body which was given for the Life of the World; and That Blood, which was Pour'd out to Redeem Mens Precious and Immortal Souls. Oh! Miracle of Goodness! Oh! Adorable Bounty of God! That such Transcendent Power should be given to the Sons of Sinful Men! What amazing Dullness is it therefore not to Admire? What shocking Prophaneness is it not to Revere so great an Authority? What monstrous Stupidity to think that Any, but God Himself, can give it? For tho' the Priesthood (as St. *Chrysostom* Observes) be exercised on Earth, yet is it deservedly reckon'd among (f) Heavenly Goods. Nor Angels, nor Arch-angels, nor any Created Being established, That sacred Order, but the (g) Holy-Ghost himself; They to whom This Power was given, were told by him who gave it, that They, and only They, Receiv'd it. "For what Ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever Ye shall lose on Earth, shall be lost in Heaven." Temporal Princes have

(f) See *Chrysostom de Sacerdotio* passim, Dr. *Hicks*, and the Incomparable *Hooker*. (g) See *Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book Vth.

indeed a Power to Bind, but then This Affects the Body only, Whereas Ministerial Power Binds the Soul, is extended beyond the Grave, Reaches even to Heaven, and triumphs with Eternity itself. God ratifies (h) Above, what His Ministers justly transact Below ; And the Righteous Master gladly Confirms the unerring Sentence of his Faithful Servants. It is certainly therefore the very utmost Extravagance of Madness, to Despise or Deny a Power, without which We can hope for no Salvation ; without which We can Never acquire the Possession of Promised Rewards ; without which We can Never be Admitted to the Happy Mansions of Unspeakable Bliss. For if None (I mean None in a regular Way) can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, unless He be first Regenerated with Water and the Holy-Ghost ; if He that eateth not the Flesh of the Lord, and drinketh not his Blood, is absolutely Deprived of Eternal Life ; And if it be by the Hallow'd and Uplifted Hands

(h) "The Regular Ministers are Authoriz'd to Declare God's Pleasure unto Such as *Believe* and *Repent* ; and in his Name to Certify and give full Assurance to their Consciences that their Sins are forgiven. For tho' Others may indeed bring glad Tidings of Good Things to the *Penitent* Sinner, as *truly* as they do ; Yet neither is it to be expected that they *should*, or indeed that they *can* do it, with the same Authority and Power, with such full Assurance, and such Entire Satisfaction to the Afflicted, Broken, and Wounded Conscience."

See the Great *Primate Usher*.

of

of the Ministry ; if it be (My *Brethren*!) by Your Hands that All These Things must be done, How can either the Inextinguishable Fires of Hell be avoided, or the Radiant Crowns of Glories, Prepared for Men in Heaven, be (i) Obtain'd, without Your Help and Assistance ? To You is Consign'd The Power of the Keys, The Keys of Heaven, of Hell, and of Death. To You are Committed all The Means, The Ministrations, The Powers, The Instruments, The Energies of Grace. By You, Men put on Christ, By You, They are United to the Son of God ; and by Your Prevalent Acts, They are constituted Members of His Sacred Polity and Communion.

Having thus largely Proved, that God has truly establish'd a Ministry by Christ and his Apostles, to Act between Himself and Mankind, in the Great and Important Affair of their Salvation ; I Proceed now to my

Second Observable, which is to shew, That all Opposition to this Ministry really is, and must be looked upon as exceedingly Sinful.

But before I Proceed, I think it Necessary to Observe, that the Power, the Mission, and the Authority of the Ministry, is a Matter of Fact, which can only be Determined by the Practice of the Apostles, and the Universal

(i) See *Chrysostom de Sacerdotio*.

Practice of the Church since the Apostolick Ages.

As for the Practice of the Apostles, It is (I think) Plain from the Scriptures themselves ; and especially from the Sacred and Inimitable Pastoral of St. *Paul*, address'd to *Timothy* and *Titus*, as a Scheme of Discipline by which they were to Govern both Themselves and their Flocks.

As for the Practice of the Church, That will (I imagine) be demonstrably Evident from the Venerable Writings of the Primitive Fathers, and the various Histories of Canons and Councils. To Go on then ;

If the Religion of Christ cannot be duly Propagated and effectually Supported without a constant Succession of Preachers and Ministers ; if the Office and Succession of the Ministry be Actually Imply'd and Instituted in the Holy Scriptures ; if These very Men, who, by God's own Appointment, are the Ministers of His Word ; are also the Ministers of His Holy Sacraments ; if They, who have Labour'd in the Ministry, without being regularly appointed to it, have been (k) Constantly Condemn'd by the Whole Church of Christ,

(k) See the famous Story of *Colluthus* and *Ischyas* in *Socrates's* Hist. Eccles. Lib. i. Cap. 9. cum Notis *Valesii*. See also the Account of the *Meletian* Presbyters, Ibid. See the *Apostolical Canons*, Can. 32. *Chalcedonian Canons*, Can. 5 & 8. *Gangran Canons*, Can. 6. *Canons of the Second Council of Carthage*, Can. 9. See *Bingham* of the Re-ordination of Hereticks and Schismatics, See also *Chemnitius*

Then

Then it is Certain that all Opposition to this Ministry is an Opposition to Religion itself, and consequently must be a Sin.

But farther ; if Christ has Receiv'd Men to Salvation, upon Terms and Conditions Proposed and Offered by Him, not Calculated and Contrived by Them, Then it is Necessary that These Terms and Conditions should be nicely Weighed and seriously Regarded ; If Christ has a Power of making any Institutions, The Impious Consequence of Denying which I dare not Pursue ; If Christ (I say) has a Sufficient Power, or a Divine Right, of Making any Institutions, then certainly These Institutions ought strictly to be Observed. And lastly, if Christ has a Right to Our Obedience, He has undoubtedly a Right to Prescribe the Rules, the Forms, the Measures of That Obedience ; And for Men to violate These Rules, would be a Profanation of his Laws and Injunctions, and therefore cannot but be a Scandalous Contempt of Heaven.

Again, if Christianity itself entitles Us to Salvation no Otherwise than as it is a Covenant of Grace ; if the only adequate and proper Obedience to Christ's Laws is strictly Obeying them, in the very same Sense that Christ really intended them ; if for very weighty Reasons, We are obliged to Assent to some of Christ's Doctrines, in the same Sense in which He taught them, it will also for the very same Reasons follow, that We are indispensably Obligated to Obey some of
His

His Institutions, in the very same Manner in which He has Prescribed them,

Once more, Either Divine Institutions are to be comply'd with, or They are not. If They are not, Why (I Pray) may not Divine Revelations also be laid Aside? This We are sure of, they stand on the very same Foundation; The Reason and Nature of their Obligations are perfectly and entirely the same. They are Both the Indisputable Will of God Discover'd to Mankind; The One of them to be nicely Observ'd, The Other to be fully Believ'd. If therefore We are not Bound to Comply with his Will in the One Case, it will seem very Difficult, to Any Impartial Judge, to Determine, upon what Grounds We are obliged to Submit to it in the Other.

But briefly and effectually to Dispatch this Head; If the Power, the Mission, the Authority of the Ministry be Constituted of Heaven; if it be Commanded of God for a perpetual Ordinance: If it be Imposed upon Us by Him, Whom All Things in Heaven and Earth gladly Obey; If it be Appointed to be for ever Observ'd in his Church, Woe! Eternal Woe be to him that fighteth against God; that striveth with his Maker; that labours to Cancel the Righteous Acts of his Eternal Decrees. It is Our Duty and Our Interest to acquiesce in all the Divine Appointments; And it is the only Source of Our Obedience, if We have any Respect to the Recompence of Reward. The True,
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The Humble, The Pious Christian can no more be the Creature of His own frail Opinions, than He can be the Author of His own Eternal Salvation. 'Tis Absurd to Measure God's Immutable Will, by the Weak Models of Our own Whimsical Fancies; 'tis Madness to Oppose the Cobwebs of Human Understanding to the fix'd and inviolable Determinations of Infinite Knowledge; And 'tis Blasphemy to Censure the Wise Proceedings of Our Almighty Creator.

I Proceed now to my Third and Last Observable, Which is to shew, That No Excuse can possibly be found out by Man, which will induce God to Pardon Those that obstinately Persevere in Opposing the Establish'd Ministry.

Of all the various and spiteful Oppositions to the Establish'd Ministry, The most Prejudiced and Unreasonable, The most Sinful and Dangerous is That which is so violently carried on by *Schism* and Separation. Now the Sin of Schism has been always look'd upon by the Wisest Men of All Ages, and of All Persuasions, as a Sin of the blackest Dye, and the most detestable Nature. Nay, It has been often Styl'd by the most (1) Learned among the *Schismatics* themselves, The Mother of Confusion, The Nurse
of

(1) See *Baxter's Cure of Divisions*, the *Defence* of the Cure, and His *Christian Directory*.

of Atheism, The Inlet of Popery, and The most fruitful (m) Source of all Errors and Heresies. There is Nothing (say (n) *Cyprian*, (o) *Irenaeus*, and (p) *Chrysostom*) that Provokes God more than to Divide His Church; and even the *Prevailing* Blood of Martyrdom is not sufficient to Wash away the Heinous Guilt of it. Indeed if We rightly consider the heinous Malignity, and the fatal Consequence of This Dreadful Crime, We must readily Conclude, that the strong Exclamations made against it by the Primitive Writers, have certainly Somewhat in them too Great and Momentous to be look'd upon only as the Pious Extravagances of Enflamed Zeal.

It was a very serious Consideration of this Important Affair, that Animated the first Christians to the Practice of so laudable a Custom, that whenever *Hereticks* or *Schismatics* were Promoted to any eminent Post in the Church, Both *Clergy* and *Laity* Remonstrated to the *Emperor*, and the *Patriarch*, or (q) *Metropolitan*, piously Refused the Consecration.

(m) See Bp. *Stillingsfleet* of Schism and Separation. See also Dr. *Bennet*, Dr. *Wommack*, and Mr. *Burroughs*, of *Schism*. (n) *Cyprian* in *Lib. de Unitate*. (o) *Irenaeus*, *Lib. 4. Cap. 62*. (p) *Chrysostom*, in *Ephes*. (q) See The *Antiochian Canons*, Can. 11. *Nicene Canons*, Can. 4. and 6. The *Laodicean Canons*, Can. 12. And see *Balsamon* on the *African Canons*, Can. 13. and *Bingham*.

But that *Schism* is a most Dreadful, Dangerous, and Damnable Sin, is (I think) demonstrably Certain, Since It is directly Opposite to That Spirit of Love and Union, That Meekness and Goodness, That Candor and Tendernefs, That Patience and Long-suffering, which is the Peculiar Mark, The Distinguishing Character, The Bright and Essential Badge of Christ's Disciples; And without which Gentle Spirit the Scriptures positively Declare, That it is Impossible for Any Man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Church is the Mystical, the Spiritual Body of Christ. And in Order to keep it Whole and Entire, to Preserve its Purity and Beauty, its Dignity and Splendor, How earnestly does he Plead with His Heavenly Father, that this Destructive Calamity might never befall it? How Devoutly does He Pray, How Passionately does he Beg, that it might never be Rent by *Schisms*, or Distracted by Divisions; but that it might for ever Continue in perfect Unity, in Consummate Harmony, and Eternal Peace?

As long therefore as the Church requires No Terms of Communion, but what are in themselves Lawful, (and no longer is it the True Church of Christ than when it does so,) as long as the Church Imposes no Articles either of Faith or Religion, but what are entirely Consonant to the Holy Scriptures, and the Wise Interpretation of the Primitive Fathers; As long as the Autho-
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rized Ministers Preach No Doctrines, but what are Grounded upon These very Scriptures, and are also Agreeable to (r) Pure Antiquity; as long as This Heavenly Dispensation is kept up, (and may the Watchful Eye of Providence for ever Guard, and the Gracious Promise of its Great Founder for ever Protect it) so long will all Opposition to the Establish'd Ministry, be a Rendering the Body and Bowels of Our Blessed Saviour; be a Destroying the Peace, Order, and Government of the Church; be a Promoting the Designs of Hell, and Enlarging the Spacious Kingdoms of Intolerable Darkness.

The Time, usually Allotted for Discourses of This Nature, will not Permit Me to Examine All the Scruples and (s) Pretences that are often plausibly Offer'd in favour of Separation; I shall only beg leave to Observe to You, that the Eternal Natures of Things can never be Alter'd. Essential Properties will always be the Same, tho' artfully Disguised under an Infinite Variety of Modifications. And 'tis Absolutely Impossible that Truth, always Simple and Uniform, should ever become Falshood; or that Falshood, (the Greatest Monster in all the Intellectual World,) tho' assisted by the Powerful Magick of *Sophistry*, should ever Become Delightful and Heavenly Truth.

(r) See Bp. Sparrow's Collection of Canons, sub. *Tit. Concionat.* (s) See Bp. Stillingfleet of Separation.

Whatever

Whatever Pretences Men may therefore Offer to Screen themselves from the Imputation of Enormous Guilt, or speciously to Palliate their Destructive Error, This is Certain, That no National Acts, no Publick Edicts, nor *Synods*, nor *Councils*, can ever make *Schism* to be Ecclesiastical Union, or Union to be *Schism*, or indeed Either of them to be Things in their own Nature Indifferent. And as for the Plea of Conscience, which Men so loudly Trifle with in This Important Point, It must (I imagine) be Superseded by the Only Great and Adequate Rule of Conscience, which is no Other than the Scripture itself; which highly Condemns All Schisms and Separations, and Openly Denounces the Severest *Anathemas* against them.

We are nicely and cautiously to Observe, That the Church is not to be Disturb'd, Unhinged, or Undermined upon Account of some Unhappy Deficiencies in its Constitution, or some flagrant Imperfections either in its (t) Superior or Subordinate Governors. We are to Distinguish between the Men and their Office, between their Publick and Private, between their Religious and Civil Characters. The Profession is Useful and Necessary, Innocent and Honourable, tho' the Professors may be often Treacherous and Guilty, Offensive and Infamous. We all know that The Apostles themselves had

(t) See *Optatus Milevitan* & *Augustin. contra Donat.*

among them a *Judas*, The first Bishops a (u) *Paulus Samosatenus*, The Presbyters an (w) *Arrius*, The Deacons an (x) *Aerius*. 'Tis a monstrous Absurdity to argue from an Abuse of any Power, to the Unlawfulness of That Power. Must Men (I pray) Submit to no Government, that has been once Tainted by Evil Administration? Must They be of no Church that has Any Mixture of Weakness or Error, but what is entirely Devoid of Spot or Wrinkle? Must they Renounce Monarchy, because in former Ages They have Heard of Cruel, Barbarous, and Inhuman Tyrants? Or must They now Desert Episcopacy, The very Pillar and Foundation of all Pure Religion, and the best and greatest, if not the Only Security of Our Present Happy Establishment, because Some, who have formerly been Invested with That Venerable Order, were absolutely Unworthy of it.

If This Way of Arguing will hold Good, There can be no such Thing as Order and Government at all. Men may, upon These Principles, Unscheme themselves of all Church Polity; They may Exempt themselves from all the Sanctions of Civil Government; They may Divest themselves of all Religion; They may, for any Thing that They have to do with the Laws, the Privileges, or the Con-

(u) See *Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History*. (w) See *Tillemont*. See *Dr. Berriman*. See also *Maimbourg's History of Arianism*, by *Mr. Webster*. (x) See *Augustin de Hares. Epiphani. in Panario and Philastrius de Hares.*
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ditions of Human Society, for ever Seclude themselves from the World.

The Spiritual Powers that be, are Ordained of God. To Rebel against Them is to Rebel against Heaven. To Invade their Authority is to Infringe upon Christ's own Peculiar Property. And We have Demonstrative Arguments, Drawn from the Worth and Excellency of the Soul, (whose Interests are of infinitely Greater Moment than Any Concerns of this Life,) to prove, that Our Obligations to Ecclesiastical Obedience, are Stronger than Those that flow either from Civil or Natural Relations.

Altar must not be Erected against Altar; and a New Priesthood can never be Raised. A New Revelation, how Expedient soever it may seem to some Men, or even Subservient to the Cause of Virtue, is not now to be Expected. And 'tis a Melancholy Reflection to think of Those that Worship not Our Lord Jesus Christ in Truth, how earnestly soever they may Contend for Worshipping him in Sincerity.

God is not so extravagantly (y) Profuse of His Supernatural Influences, as to Bestow them where there is no Manifest Want of them, nor any (z) Great Probability of their turning to a Good or Religious Account. His *Revelations* are so full as not to admit of Any Improvements, and His *Ordinances* so

(y) See the History of *Montanism*. (z) See *Spinckes's Pretenders to Prophecy* examined, Pag. 363.

fix'd as not to *allow* of Any *New* Amendments. Whatever therefore is Appointed by the Instigation or Artifice of Human Policy, in order to Change, New-Model, and Abrogate the sacred Hierarchy; to Disturb, Violate, and Destroy the Positive Institutions of God; to Subvert, Sap, and Undermine the Essentials of Christ's Religion, is Impiety, is Sacrilege, is absolute Idolatry.

Such Presuming, Such Arrogant, Such Self-Originated Pastors, may indeed Pretend a Commission from God, but having None, they attempt his Publick Work without a Publick Authority. They Profane the Sacred Function, and make a Trifle of the most Dreadful Sin. They Crucify their Blessed Lord afresh, and put Him to an Open Shame. They are Incessant Troublers and Seducers of the People; They are Infallible Subverters and Destroyers of Souls. They take away all Distinction between the Shepherd and the Flock. They are Usurpers of the Broad-Seal of Heaven. Blind as *Sampson*, They Exert all their Strength to pull down the Pillars of Our Ecclesiastical Constitution; and Bold, as *Phaeton*, with a Glaring Ignorance and Unconscious Impudence, They Burn up the Spiritual World.

With Regard to Those presumptuously Arrogant Teachers, and their Obstinately Blind Followers, Charity Herself, That Heaven-born Virgin, which kindly draws a Veil o'er every Human Ill, stands Startled and Amazed; in vain She strives, in vain She labours

labours to **Excuse** them; tho' She Hopeth and Believeth All Things, yet still She Repines, that 'tis not in Her Power to think so Favourably of them as (a) *Origen* did of their Father the Devil, who falsely Imagined He might be Saved.

What I have hitherto Advanced might be more fully Confirm'd, should I Proceed to shew how exceedingly Tender the Almighty is of His own Institutions, by Exemplifying the Punishments Inflicted on Those, who have impiously made Invasions on Them. How (b) *Saul* was Dethroned for Invading the Priest's Office. How (c) *Jeroboam* and his House were cut off for *Abolishing* the Priests of *Levi*, and Setting up New Ones of his own Chusing. How (d) *Uzzah* most grievously Provoked the Lord to Anger, when He took hold of the Ark, tho' He saw it in danger of falling. But being neither *Priest* nor *Levite*, i. e. Having no Qualification for what He did, tho' He did it out of a very good and honest Design, and therefore His Error (if any Voluntary Errors could be *Innocent*) might perfectly seem so, yet Imme-

(a) This monstrous Error of the famous *Origen*, is mention'd by St. *Jerome* in Lib. 2. *Apol. adversus Ruffin.*

These two Great Men, who were by far the most Learned of all the *Fathers*, shew us how easily *Speculative Errors* in Religion, may take hold of the very Best and Wisest *Ecclesiasticks*.

(b) 1 *Sam.* Ch. 13. Ver. 9, and 13, and Chap. 15. Ver. 23, 25, 26. (c) 1 *Kings* C. 12. Ver. 31. (d) 1 *Chron.* Ch. 13. Ver. 9, 10.

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diate Death was inflicted upon Him for His Presumptuous Transgression. And lastly, How (e) *Corah*, by making bitter Invectives against the Governors and Officers appointed by God, Affronted the Divine Majesty, and trampled upon the Sacred Authority. But the fatal Catastrophe of Himself and His *Schismatical* Companions is too Notoriously shocking to be more largely Display'd.

In short, Nothing is more Dangerous, Nothing more Dreadful, than for Men to Assume to themselves a Power, which Heaven has Deny'd them ; and to claim an Authority, which God, eternally Jealous of his own Incommunicable Honour, has Actually forbidden them. Such Men may indeed possibly Deceive the World, under a false Character, but God will not be Mock'd ; The All-Wise will not be Over-reach'd by the Crafty Presumptions of feign'd Stewards ; nor will the Monarch of Heaven be Imposed upon by the Pretended Credentials of false Embassadors.

From what has been Offer'd It fully Appears, that there is a manifest Distinction between Clergy and Laity, that All are not Priests alike, that All have not (f) Power

(e) *Numb.* Ch. 16. Ver. 31, 32, 33. See also *Josephus* in Lib. 4. *Antiqu. Judæ.* Cap. 2, & 3.

(f) See Dr. *Rogers's* View and Review, Mr. *Stebbing's* Polemical Tracts, Bp. *Hall*, Bp. *Bilson*, A. Bps *Bramhall*, Bp. *Sanderson*, *Saravia*, Bp. *Potter*, Bp. *Hare*, Bp. *Sherlock*, Dr. *Hicks*, and *Hooker's* Ecclesiastical Polity, Dr. *Hammond* against *Blondell*, Bp. *Mountague*, Dr. *Field*, Mr. *Hughes*, and Mr. *Mason*.

alike ;

alike; And that no Man can justly take to himself this Honour, unless he be expressly call'd of God, as was (g) *Aaron*. Our Blessed Saviour then has Undoubtedly Appointed certain Officers, with proper Authority to Teach, to Govern, to Correct, and Preserve an External Polity and Discipline in his Church. He Importunately Demands an Awful Submission to what he Himself Taught and Ordain'd. And the very same Submission, that was due to Him upon Account of His Great Commission, He Authoritatively Demands and Requires to be paid to his Delegated Officers upon the Venerable Account of Theirs.

But after All. How rigidly Severe or Exalted soever our Notions of a *Divine Mission*,

(g) *Morinus* has a very Beautiful and Curious Remark to this Purpose, "The most High God (says He) came down to Mount *Sinai*, and Consecrated *Moses*, *Moses* laid his Hands upon *Aaron*, *Aaron* upon his Sons, his Sons successively upon Those that followed them until *John the Baptist*; *John the Baptist* laid his Hands upon Our Saviour, Our Saviour upon his Apostles, His Apostles on the Bishops that succeeded them, and They ever since on Those who are admitted into Holy Orders." See *Morinus de Ordinationibus Maronitarum*.

Tho' it may seem strange, that *Morinus* should call *Moses* a Priest, yet This is Confirm'd by *Philo*, who expressly styles him thus, viz. Μωϋσῆν ἀριστον βασιλέα, καὶ Νομοθετὴν, καὶ Ἀρχιερέα. *Philo de Vita Moysi*, P. 681, and Pag. 696. Edit. *Frankfurt*. 1691. See also *Exodus* Chap. 29. V. 9. and *Exod.* Ch. 30. V. 30. *Greg. Nazianz. Oratio Sexta*, *Huetius* & *Eusebius* in Demonst.

or the Absolute Necessity of Our Submitting Ourselves to *Church-Government* may seem; Tho' We Declare, that No Authority can be a true Authority, unless Convey'd by Those, who are regularly Appointed to Convey it; Tho' We Maintain, That No Church can be a True Church, but What is Govern'd by Those, who have Receiv'd a Governing Power from the Apostles in Succession; Tho' We assert, that No Ministerial Office can be Valid, unless Perform'd by Those, who are duly called and legally Commission'd; Yet in Case of a Real and Absolute, not a False and Pretended Necessity, (not The Daring and Presumptuous Plea of the *(b) Kirk*, not the Feign'd, but more Plausible Excuse of *Geneva*, not the Boasted Moderation of Those, who falsely call themselves *Churches Reform'd*) We would not willingly think Those Men, who, tho' Unauthorized, piously Preach the Religion of Jesus, to be Guilty of Sacrilege, or to Incur the dreadful Penalty of Damnation. No. In Pity to their Unavoidable Misfortune, in Compassion to their Unconquerable

(b) That Man must be a Perfect Stranger to *Modern History*, who is Ignorant that the *Kirk* very rebelliously and impiously Rejected *Episcopacy*. *Geneva* has had several very fair Opportunities of Embracing and Establishing it. And there is Great Reason to hope that the *Reform'd Churches* abroad might, upon Proper Application, happily at last succeed in Obtaining This Great and Apostolical Institution, which is so *essentially* Necessary to the very Being of a True Church.

Necessity,

Necessity, We Consign them not to the Insolent State of a Gloomy Deprivation, Nor shall We Commit them to the Merciless and Irreversible Fate of Eternal Misery. They are in the Hands of a Merciful Creator; We leave them to their Guardian Angels, and to That Providence which Continually Preserveth All Things.

I come now briefly to offer some Suitable Reflections upon the Doctrines establish'd.

Since then it hath Pleas'd the God of Purity and Order to Purchase to Himself, by the precious Blood of His Son Christ Jesus (the Great Bishop and Shepherd of Our Souls) an Holy Church and a Chosen Priesthood. Since for the best and noblest Purposes He has given some *Apostles*, some *Prophets*, some *Evangelists*, some *Pastors* and *Teachers*, for the regular Discharge of the Ministry, and the Perfecting of the Saints. Since This is the Great, the Glorious Design of the Evangelical Scheme, It is Our Indispensable Duty to Contend earnestly for This Article of Our Faith. We are Zealously to guard This Sacred Depositum Committed to Our Trust, as essentially Necessary to the very Being of All Religion. For if Our Daring Adversaries can but once Persuade Men, that the Divine Institution of the Ministry, and the Regular Establishment of Church-Government are Nothing but the Artful Contrivances of Ambitious Prelates, or of Indigent Priests, They

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will soon Convince them, that All the Christian Doctrines, that All Religious Institutions Derive their Spurious Original from the same fruitfully Politick Invention. This, This Unreasonable and Impious Prejudice is the Great Foundation of All Our Religious Grievances and Calamities; This is the Prolifick Cause of All our *Modern* Profaneness, and All Our *Fashionable* Infidelity.

Should indeed This Wild and Inconsistent Scheme Once take place, We must then immediately bid Farewel to All the Beauty of Order and Decency, to Virtue and Morality, to Loyalty and Religion. Nothing Then would be left for Us, but to lament in Silence, That Universal Deluge of Confusion and Anarchy, which would necessarily Overwhelm an Unhappy Church, and an Infatuated Nation. How would the Beauty of Our *Sion* (the Joy and Glory of the Christian World) languish and decay? No longer would Her Priests be Clad with Righteousness, or Deck'd with Health; And no longer would Her Saints Rejoice and Sing. But in order to stop this Growing Evil, to Prevent this Dreadful Danger, to Avert this Impending Calamity, We are to make *full* Proof of Our Ministry. We are to be Burning and Shining Lights in the midst of a Crooked and Perverse Generation. We are to be Inflexibly Honest, and Obstinate Good. We are to give No Offence in any Thing, that Our Office may not be Blamed. And that it may never be Exposed to the
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studied Malice, or the witty Censures of Ungodly Men, We are to Embellish the Beauties of the *Civil*, with all the Graces of the *Christian* Life. The Gentleman and the Scholar, The Wit and the Politician, The Philosopher and the Christian, should Compleat the Character and Exhaust the Idea of a Divine. All the Various, Passions, Appetites, Affections, Conversations, and Actions of Men, come under our Immediate Inspection and Guidance; How extremely Difficult then is Our Office, and how nicely Regular and Exact should Our Conduct be? We must not therefore Handle the Word of God Deceitfully, but with a just Mixture of Meekness and Severity, We are to Reprove, Rebuke, Correct, and Exhort. We are not only to be Instant in Season, but also sometimes, tho' Unsuccessfully, out of Season. We must not Prophecy *Smooth* Things, in order to Alleviate the Pangs of Conscience in Great Men, to Recommend Ourselves to the Mighty and Noble, or to Conciliate the Uncertain Favour of Princes. We are to Watch for Mens Souls, as Those that must give an Account unto God for them, at the Great Day of Retribution, when Both Priest and People shall be justly judg'd. We are to feed the Flock of Christ, over whom the Holy Ghost Himself hath made Us Overseers. We are in All Things to approve Ourselves as his Ministers, in Afflictions, in Necessities, in Tumults, in Labours, in Watchings, in Fastings. We should therefore be so far from Desponding at Any Un-
generous

generous Treatment, at Any Undeserved Reproaches, at Any Unexpected Distresses, that We should Rejoice in being Despised for the sake of Our Adorable Master, who is above All, God Blessed for ever. We should Count it an Honour to suffer as Christian Professors; We should Glory in being Persecuted for the Doctrine of the Cross; and for All the Grievous Oppositions We meet with in the Labour of Love, and the Work of the Lord, We should think it an Ample Satisfaction, that They, who would Deprive Us of Our Orders, are the very Men, that would Rob their Redeemer of His Eternal Godhead and Divinity.

But to Conclude. Let All the Storms then of *Persecution* rage; let the Floods of *Heresy* tumultuously swell; let the Combined Artillery of *Faction* and *Irreligion*, of *Schism* and *Infidelity* be lavishly Discharg'd at the *Ministerial Office*; Yet will the Members of This Venerable Body (especially Those of the Sacred Order) Supported by an *Unparallel'd* Spirit of Integrity, Constantly Conduct and Arm themselves with This Noble Resolution, *viz.* No Man is Wise, who holds not the Faith; nor is He Perfectly Excellent, who is not a Christian; nor is He truly a Christian, who Perseveres not unto the End: Which God of His Infinite Mercy grant We may All do, for the sake of Ourselves, and Our Great Master, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

P O S T.

POSTSCRIPT.

I THINK myself Obliged to take Notice of *An Address to the University of OXFORD*, Occasion'd by the foregoing SERMON. I must also Observe that the learned *Author* has, by Haste or Design, Strangely Misrepresented my Meaning; and that his most *Serious* Answers to my Arguments, are generally very *Trifling* and *Impertinent*. Had He been less *Severe* upon Religion, and more *Scurrilous* upon Me, I could very easily have Excused him. But to do Justice to the World, Myself, and Our *Surprizing* Author, I shall, beg Leave to exhibit some few Specimens of His *Modesty*, His *Orthodoxy*, and His *Religion*. I Remark then, that in the *Address* (Pag. 31.) He speaks very Irreverently and Absurdly of *Baptism* and the *Eucharist*, and also Strenuously Denies the *Necessity* of These Two *Sacraments*. — He very scandalously (Pag. 43.) traduces *Episcopacy*, and Represents the whole *Venerable* Bench of *Bishops*, as very *Slender Pillars* and *Supports* of the *Christian* Religion, (One of them only Excepted, Pag. 64.) and *piously* laments the *mournful* Condition of Our Happy *Church* and *State*, upon Their Account and Administration. — He *impiously* Blasphemes (Pag. 54.) the *Jewish* Religion, a Religion, which, beyond all Controversy, came *directly* from God. — He
Positively

Positively Declares (*Pag.* 62. that the *Office* of a *Bishop* has really no Foundation in the *Holy Writings*, or in the truly *Primitive Practice*.
 “ Is not This (I Pray) *Unparallel’d Impudence*
 “ in a Man that Pretends to write of *Primitive*
 “ *institutions?*” Lastly, (*Pag.* 45, & 47.)
 In a very *Elegant* and *Becoming Style*, He Declares that very *Few Priests* Deserve the Character of *Men* or *Gentlemen*, and He *directly* Denominates That *Heaven-born Virgin*, *Charity*, an *Hell-born Whore*. — Barely to Recite such *Monstrous* and *Shocking Opinions* as These, is (I think) an *Ample Confutation* of them.

But notwithstanding all This, if Our *Sagacious* Author will *deliberately Review* His *Polite* Address, and *Ingenuously* put his Name to it, I *solemnly* Promise him it shall be fully Consider’d. In the mean Time, out of tender *Charity* to his *restless Soul*, and *Compassion* to his *bewilder’d Understanding*, I *Conscientiously* Recommend to his *Serious Perusal*, The Learned *Bishop of Oxford’s Book of Church-Government*; and *Bishop Hoadley’s Treatises of Episcopacy*, and *Conformity*; Which *Excellent Works* will remain the *Monuments of Eternal Infamy* to all our *Modern Dissenters*, and especially to Men of Our *Addresser’s Erroneous* and *Pernicious Principles*.

Oxon, Nov. 15.
 1729.

J. B.

F I N I S.